

Philosophy 173: Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality

Professor: Duane Long Jr.

Class: T/Th 5:00-6:30, Engr II Room 143

Office: HMNSS 3213

Office Hours: W 2:15-4:00

Email: hlong001@ucr.edu

Course Description

Since at least Plato, Western society has taken sexual behavior to be a target of philosophical and ethical enquiry. For most of this history, philosophers have been decidedly negative in the conclusions they reached: sexual desire as a whole has been declared the enemy of rationality and virtue, and almost all particular sexual behaviors denounced as perverse, and more recently as evidence of mental disease. In part because of the significance placed on human sexual behaviors, sexual preferences of various sorts have come to be seen as defining characteristics of a person.

In this class, we will question many classical and contemporary assumptions about human sexuality. We will ask questions about the conceptual frameworks used to make sense of sex in various ways and challenge the distinctions many of us unreflectively adopt. As we come to a clearer understanding of human sexual behavior and identity, we will explore the ethical dimensions of sex, including: How important to a good human life is sex? Are there unique ethical considerations in the realm of sex, or can sexual ethics be subsumed under more general ethical considerations? What reasons are there for morally condemning various sexual behaviors? For endorsing those behaviors? What advantages and disadvantages are there to taking certain sexual preferences as defining characteristics of a person?

Course Requirements

- One paper, 4-6 pages. 30% of quarter grade
- In-class exam. 30% of quarter grade
- Term paper, 7-10 pages. 40% of quarter grade

The first paper will be a response to prompts on material from the first half of the class. The exam will be during finals week and cover material from the second half of the class. For the term paper, students will select a topic in the philosophy of sex and sexuality (it may be, but need not be, one covered in class). Students must conduct outside research, finding at least 3 sources not included on the syllabus, and meet with the instructor no later than the eighth week to get their topic and sources approved. Final drafts of the term paper are due the last week of the quarter.

While attendance is not a grade component, regular attendance and active participation is expected.

Schedule of Topics

Week 1: What is sex?

- Greta Christina, "Are We Having Sex Now or What?"
- Christopher Hamilton, "Sex"

Week 2: Moral Stances on Sex Generally

- Roger Scruton, "Sexual Morality"
- Igor Primoratz, "Sexual Morality: Is Consent Enough?" and "Is There A Sexual Morality?"
- Duane Long Jr., "Surveying the Terrain: Analyzing Approaches to Sexual Ethics from the Perspective of Value Theory"

Week 3: Perversion

- Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion"
- Robert Solomon, "Sexual Paradigms"
- Sara Ann Ketchum, "The Good, The Bad, and The Perverted: Sexual Paradigms Revisited"
- Dirk Baltzly, "Peripatetic Perversion"
- Joseph Kupfer, "Sexual Perversion and the Good"

Week 4: Sadomasochism

- Natalie Shainess, "Sadistic Fantasies"
- Jean Grimshaw, "Ethics, Fantasy, and Self-Transformation"
- Patrick D Hopkins, "Rethinking Sadomasochism: Feminism, Interpretation, and Simulation"
- John Corvino, "Naughty Fantasies"

Week 5: Sex, Medicine, and Science

- V.L. Bulloughs, "Sex Will Never Be The Same: The Contributions of Alfred C Kinsey"
- Thomas Szasz, "The Medicalization of Sex"

Week 6: The Origin of "Sexuality"

- Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1 (excerpt: pp. 40-67)
- Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality*, 2nd edition (excerpt: "The Invention of Sexuality")

Week 7: Homosexuality

- John Corvino, "In Defense of Homosexuality"
- John Finnis, "The Wrong of Homosexuality"
- Andrew Koppelman, "Homosexuality and Infertility"

Week 8: Bisexuality

- Paula C Rust, "Two Many and Not Enough: The Meanings of Bisexual Identities"
- Corinne Bedecarre, "Swear By The Moon"
- Joy Morgenstern, "Myths of Sexuality"
- Kayley Vernallis, "Bisexual Monogamy: Twice The Temptation But Half The Fun?"

Week 9: Alternatives to Monogamy

- John McMurtry, "Monogamy: A Critique"
- Frederick Elliston, "In Defense of Promiscuity"
- Igor Primoratz, "Marriage, Adultery, Jealousy"
- Bonnie Steinbock, "Adultery"

Week 10: Dominant / Submissive Relationships

- Immanuel Kant, "Lectures on Ethics"
- Gayle Rubin, "The Leather Menace: Comments on Politics and S/M"
- Martin Weinberg, Colin Williams, and Charles Moser, "The Social Constituents of Sadomasochism"